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DEPARTMENT SIGNS CONTRACT TO PROVIDE MICROSOFT IT ACADEMY TO SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

(BOISE) – The Idaho State Department of Education (SDE) signed a contract Wednesday, July 1, 2015, with Dell, Inc., to provide Microsoft IT Academy on-line products and services for public schools and libraries in Idaho, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced today.

The program to offer Microsoft IT Academy to Idaho's students and citizens is in response to S1189, passed by this year's legislature, which appropriated one-time funds to provide technology education opportunities and/or information technology certifications to students or the state's citizens seeking to improve their job skills marketability. Should the legislature decide to renew the program next year, there are options in the contract for up to four one-year extensions of the service.

Microsoft IT Academy offers a wide variety of on-line information technology education. Certifications for successful completion of the courses will be made available free for public school students in grades 9-12 who attend schools that opt into the program and to adults through participating public libraries for a nominal fee. Each library and school will make an independent decision as to whether or not it will opt into the program. Demonstrated skills in programs such as Word and Excel, which are among the Academy's programs, are in increasing demand by employers.

The Microsoft IT Academy package provides training and certifications at the specialist, expert and master levels in the use of Office 2010 and Office 2013. In addition, the Academy offers a Microsoft Technology Associate certification in computer science and Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer (MCSD) certifications for Windows Store apps using C# and Web applications.

For more information about the contract, or Microsoft IT Academy, contact Rick Kennedy at (208) 332-6852 or by email at rkennedy@sde.idaho.gov.

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